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## THE LIFE OF A COMPOSER, AN ARABESQUE.

BY CARL MARIA VON WEBER.

(From the Musical World.)

The following eccentric and fanciful sketch, evidently intended as a parody of the author's own adventures and feelings, cannot fail to interest the musical reader, especially at this moment, when Weber's last and greatest work, the *Oberon* — alas! — the song of the Swan, is fully sustaining, if not elevating, the ambitious intentions of the composer, and the most sanguine hopes and wishes of his friends and admirers. The sketch is translated from "*Tonkünstlers Leben, eine Arabeske*," printed in a collection of Weber's papers, which was published shortly after his lamented decease, for the benefit of his family.

AWAY flew the hammer from its joint — and crash went some half dozen strings — with such fury did I dash my hands upon the keys of the pianoforte. In one corner lay the scribbled music-paper, and in another the music-stool; with lengthened strides I paced my little chamber, and zigzagged in and out of every corner, adroitly avoiding, however, even in the height of my agitation, every sharp angle of the furniture. What for months before had caused me daily annoyance, had, within the last few weeks, risen to its height and grown absolutely insupportable. That indefinite yearning of the heart for something from which we hope for relief, without being able to give ourselves any satisfactory reason *why*; that painful struggle of the inter-

nal powers, which are kept bound in fetters by the consciousness of the unattainable ideal, a bondage from which, at times, there appears no hope of getting free; that irresistible impulse to labor, which raises gigantic images, and after all exhausts itself in mere emptiness of thought; that chaos of fluctuating and anxious feelings, which so often overpowers the whole soul of the artist, had at this moment entirely overwhelmed my own. All the wishes, dreams, and resolutions, connected as well with the heart, as with the general affairs of life, which had frequently before sprung up at shorter intervals, now came upon me with redoubled violence, and drove me absolutely frantic. The burden of existence weighed heavily upon me; fain would I have sought relief from it in the solace of art; but as art exists by life alone, and life by art, they, mutually, combined to destroy both themselves and me. Exhausted, at length, by my internal struggle, I half unconsciously took my customary seat at the pianoforte.

The composer who draws his materials from his instrument, is little else than a child of distress; or, at all events, is on the highway to poverty of spirit, and its inseparable companions, vulgarity and commonplace. Yes, even these hands, these cursed pianoforte fingers, which by eternal hammering and practising assume, at last, a kind of independency and will of their own — even these become the ignorant tyrants and task-masters of the creative faculties. *They* invent nothing new; nay, what is worse, they are ever ready to war with whatever is not old. Cunning and roguish, like true handicraftsmen, they patch up, from musty antiquated materials, forms of tone that have almost the look of new figures; and these, as they have something taking in their sound, bribe the ear, which sits as judge in the first instance, and secure a favorable reception. How very differently does he compose, whose *inward* ear is the judge of what is created, and which, in the very act of its invention, is submitted to the ordeal of criticism. The mental ear has a wonderful tact in receiving the forms of tone, and assigning to them their relative value. Herein lies that divine secret, which is known only to the initiated, and remains incomprehensible to the many.

Such an ear hears whole periods, nay, entire pieces at once. It passes over little occasional lacunæ and irregularities, content to leave them to be filled up in some happier moment; and afterwards, as time and opportunity serve, will review the whole in its parts, and not refuse to abbreviate and retouch, where maturer judgment shall point out.

An ear like this delights to see some finished whole ; a form of tone with that individuality of features, which, if but once looked at by the eye of a stranger, will be recognised again. This is what it desires, and not a mere *lay-figure*, a thing of shreds and patches. If the mind has conceived such an image, it must be content to let it go its time ; for good things will have their due season of maturity ; it must be fed with proper nourishment, and be reared with care.

At length, an internal voice whispered to me, "Thou must depart — forward, forward ! The artist's sphere of action is the world. What avails thee to bury thyself longer in the narrow-minded circle of thy acquaintance ? What, the gracious favor of some little Mæcenas, extended to thee in payment for some tune reluctantly furnished, to suffer from his stupid and heartless rhymes ? — What, the boisterous applause of the multitude on parade, for a successful march ? What, even the friendly squeeze of the hand by a pretty neighbor, as the reward of a couple of spirited waltzes ? Forward ! try thy genius among strangers, and when the exercise of thy talent has given satisfaction to men of judgment — when thou hast advanced their knowledge of thy art, and appropriated to thyself their information, — then return to thy home of peace, and enjoy the fruit of thine industry."

I immediately packed up my instruments, embraced the few individuals whom I counted as friends, requested two or three introductions to families in the next little town, and commenced my journey in the humble stage, which the state of my purse very strongly recommended. It was late in the evening ; like dumb shadows my travelling companions sat beside me ; not an observation disturbed the deep repose, and I soon settled into a placid sleep, from which I was aroused at early dawn, by the ready hand of the driver, who demanded his fee.

I beheld the unfolding of day in placid grandeur. — The holy *crescendo* of nature, displaying itself in a beauteous succession of colors, awakened in my youthful breast a glow of devotional feeling. Filled with serenity and confidence, my inmost soul turned to that power who had infused into my mind a disposition for an art which was to stamp my future life, and which, once implanted, could never again be rooted out. I felt conscious that I was acting up to my vocation, and enjoyed the internal satisfaction of duty fulfilled.

Nature operates on me in a peculiar manner. That quality of the mind, in which all the other faculties concentrate — call it talent,

vocation, genius, what you will — restricts within its magic circle all our powers of vision. Not only to our physical, but also to our mental eye, is its particular horizon assigned. Both may be varied by change of position; and well is it for the artist, if, in his progress forward, he can enlarge it; for to go out of it is impossible. Nay more — all objects assume the peculiar coloring of the artist's mind, and imperceptibly partake of the characteristic tone of his life and sensations. At least, I acknowledge that such is the fact in my case: with me, every thing is associated with musical forms, and becomes modified accordingly. The contemplation of a landscape is to me like the performance of a piece of music. I feel the effect of the whole upon my mind, without analyzing, or dwelling upon, the individual parts of it. In a word, strange as it may seem, the landscape has upon me the effect of a rhythmical movement; it is to me a successive enjoyment. But it is equally a source of delight and of pain; of delight, when I calmly contemplate the manner in which interesting objects are harmoniously blended together; and of pain, when I see these objects mingled and confused, as they are beheld from the window of a stage coach. A corresponding confusion is communicated to my mind; all my associations become wild and disorderly. Good heaven! perhaps at the very moment I am beating out a confoundedly complicated fugue, a rondo theme will start up, which in its turn is supplanted by a pastorale, and that again by a furioso, or a funeral march. By my fellow passengers, ignorant of the peculiar workings of my mind, and deterred from conversation by my strange and unsocial demeanor, I am, of course, set down as one of the stupidest fellows in existence!

Meanwhile, we had reached the pleasant little town of X —, and so powerfully did I feel the mania of essaying my musical powers, that, contrary to my first intention, I resolved on sojourning there for a time, in order to gratify it. "None but a faint-hearted simpleton," said I to myself, "suffers himself to be dejected." So humming Pedrillo's air in *Die Entführung* (Mozart's *Seraglio*), I sought the refreshment of my couch, full of buoyant hopes respecting my projected concert.

On the following morning, I made the best figure I could, and waited on Mr. Von Y —, of the musical taste of whose family I had heard a great deal, and who was one of the most influential personages in that small town.

He saluted me with, "Ah, welcome! I am extremely happy to make your acquaintance; I assure you, in several letters I have re-

ceived, your name has been very favorably mentioned. — (I bowed.) — You, of course, know my newest sonatas ? ”

I was strangely embarrassed. “ I beg pardon, but really I cannot say that — ”

“ But,” interrupted he, “ the quartet ! ”

“ I am very sorry,” said I, stammering and blushing at the time ; “ but I do not remember — ”

“ Well,” said my host, not a little disconcerted, “ at all events, you must be familiar with my set of capriccios — at least, if you read the journals, or are at all conversant with scientific literature.”

I felt that these perplexing questions must be put a stop to, and so plunged at once into the desperate confession. “ I am ashamed of my ignorance ; but was really unaware of the fact, that Herr Von Y — composed.”

The good gentleman’s countenance fell ; and lowering instantly the tone of his voice, he said, “ My dear friend, I am really very sorry, but understanding that you propose giving concerts, I must candidly tell you that you have very little chance, very little indeed, of doing any good here. The people of this place, Sir, are critical judges ; critical as the Viennese themselves, and (here a new thought seemed to strike him) — unless, indeed, you could prevail on my daughter to sing — in that case — ”

At this moment the door of the room opened, and a young female entered, whose figure and appearance were of a kind to provoke observation, not unmingled with mirth. She was her father’s Opera 1<sup>re</sup>, and a truly droll specimen of composition did she exhibit. Do but picture to yourself a diminutive creature, burdened with a tremendously large head, covered with black shaggy hair, and ornamented with a tiara of false diamonds of unconscionable size. From her mouth, at the formation of which the Graces did not certainly preside, issued a voice which resembled a pitch-pipe of the days of good Guido Aretinus, and screeched such tones, that my ears enjoyed sensations similar to those produced by scratching on a pane of glass. The delicate daughter threw her spider-like arms around her papa, who introduced her to me as a scholar of the art, and said, “ You must sing this gentleman a part of your grand scena ; you know how much I admire it. Sir, it is a composition at once lofty and profound.” — (I bowed.)

The young cantatrice eyed me from top to toe, with that kind of patronizing air which your long-pursed amateur knows so well how

to affect, and then, turning, said to her father, "Papa, you know (and here she strove to get up a cough,) you know what a cold I have got; I am absolutely hoarse to-day; (here she began a strained croaking;) good heavens! you yourself hear in what bad order my voice is."

The fact is, that nature had denied the lady organs capable of producing any thing like an endurable tone; and when she began again to essay, I felt alarmed. I, however, suppressed my repugnance, and feeling that interest prompted my doing the polite thing, I interposed, and begged that the lady would honor me by singing a few measures.

The condescending maiden (evidently nothing loth) complied. She squatted down before the pianoforte, and after hammering out a few chords with all her might, and blundering an unfortunate slipshod run through the semi-tones, she screamed a bravura air of Scarlatti.

I showed all the interest I could fain, striving occasionally to get a peep at the notes, over her active and broad-spread shoulders. At every dozen measures, she would exclaim, with a languishing turn of the head, "You see, I can't make it out at all!" She then coughed again, and offered little appoggiatura remarks upon her hoarseness, and amidst increasing interruptions, at last got to the end of her task. I struggled against nature to say something handsome of the performance, for my very teeth were set on edge; some of her upper notes were for all the world like those of the hurdy-gurdy. Nothing could be more dangerous than admiration at such a moment; for I saw she was on the point of treating me to another specimen, when luckily her mother entered. This lady was a perfect copy of Xantippe, in a high state of preservation. The moment she came in, she set up a shout of admiration, compared to which, the noise of one of Wranitzky's allegros is but as the rustling of a few leaves. I thought it but common politeness to contribute my quota of admiration at the same time; but my feeble "bravo!" died away unheard amidst the tempest of her applause.

"My daughter, Sir," said she at last, after she had somewhat recovered from her raptures, "is a true musical genius; the talent she possesses is astonishing! and though she did not begin to study music till thirteen, she has frequently corrected the *Stadt-musikant* (musician in ordinary to the town) in *general bass*. And then, Sir, you should hear how beautifully she plays on the *Stahl-harmo-*

nica. O, go and fetch it; there is nothing to compare to that charming instrument!"

The agonies of death seized me, in anticipation of this new ordeal, and I could only stammer out, that it certainly was an instrument adapted to Adagios.

"True," said the pertinacious mamma, "Adagios, that is the very thing; so, my dear, pray play us Mozart's *Bird-catcher*."

I could contain myself no longer; disgust gave way to an inclination to laugh, and in spite of all my struggles, the suppressed titter at length broke forth. The countenances of the whole family underwent an instantaneous change; and, from a smirk of self-complacency, fell some dozen inches in length. They whispered to each other: my ear caught the words, "Utterly destitute of all taste" — "No more ear for true music than an ape," — and in the course of five minutes, I found myself left quite alone. The father was called away upon particular business, the mother was wanted in the kitchen, and the Signora figlia, complaining of head-ache, scampered away to her boudoir. I drew breath as though my lungs were obliged to supply the bellows of the great organ at Westminster; and, after a moment's pause, laying my finger on my nose, I performed the *scala descendendo*, and walked quietly out of the house, fully resolved never again to attempt to propitiate the patronage of a musical family.

I determined to go directly to the *Stadt-musikus*, to engage the necessary performers for my concert.

I had not proceeded far in the street, when I met a group of chorus-singers, who were preparing to treat the towns-people to a piece of music. They were coughing themselves right lustily into good voice.

Oh divine human organ! thou first instrument bestowed upon us by the Creator, according to which all others are modelled; thou that alone art capable of truly and effectively moving the feelings; how admirably do thy powers appear to me in a choral song, which, even when exercised in an humble degree, put me quite in a glow, and strike to my very heart!

Though full of my project, I halted, prepared to listen to a chorus, simple, touching, and in every respect adapted to the feelings and capacity of the people. But my evil stars had doomed me to-day to nothing but vexation and annoyance; and what should my gentlemen strike up but one of the latest airs from the opera of *Fanchon*; and

even this they so dreadfully mangled, keeping neither time nor tune, that I made no scruple of accosting the lanky singer of the bass, who stood next to me, and who, as he was filling up his pause in the piece by voraciously swallowing a jorum of bread and milk, appeared the least likely to suffer any interruption, inquiring of him the direction of Mr. —, the *Stadt-musikus*, "Sir, *Der Herr Principal* lives yonder to the right; you cannot possibly miss the house; you will be sure to hear them, for this is the very hour they are practising the Russian horn-music; but I don't think you'll find any vacancy at present."

Not a little chagrined at the fellow's coolness, I answered rather testily, that I was in want of no such situation, and turning sharply on my heel, I steered my course directly towards the house. Sure enough I had no difficulty in finding it; for of all the horrid noises I had ever heard, this was the most appalling. Feeling considerable alarm for the drums of my ears, I cautiously approached the scene of uproar, and at length making a bold effort, entered the school. The scene that presented itself was whimsical in the extreme. In a circle of from ten to fifteen boys, who were blowing their horns with all their might, or at least stood in the act of blowing, was stationed the *Stadt-musikus*, who grasped in both hands a baton of formidable size, with which he beat the time upon a pianoforte that stood near him, and occasionally upon the head of the unlucky wight who happened to miss the time; and all this had the additional accompaniment of his feet, with which he stamped with the fury of one who had lately escaped from the madhouse. They were performing an overture of his own composition, in which the horns had a very predominant part, and which his scholars were playing after the Russian fashion — a horn to every single note. To the right and left were ranged other performers on the violin, clarionet, bassoon, trombone, &c., who were working away with all their might, giving every passage *fortissimo*; and in the midst of this terrible din was, at every instant, heard the infuriated exclamation of the director: "Wrong, you blundering dog! too high! too low! too quick! too slow! attention there!" &c.

My entrance did not mend matters; there was something more novel in the appearance of a stranger than in their master's score, and every eye was turned towards me, to the good director's no small annoyance. The moment was critical; they had just come to the *allegro*, and the master wishing to rally the attention of his scholars,

and bring his favorite passage to bear, waxed warm in the fervour of direction, and beat and stamped with redoubled fury. At this unlucky moment, a long board, which served as a music-shelf, having become loosened by such powerful and incessant vibration, came down with a crash upon the pianoforte, and sent the sounding board in shivers into the air. A burst of laughter, *all'unisono*, followed, and there was an end of every thing like music, at least for this sitting. Profiting of this moment, I stepped forward, and introduced myself to the worthy director.

(To be continued.)

## LETTER OF MOZART TO A FRIEND.

From the Musical World.

[The following is a translation of an original letter in the possession of Mr. Moscheles, which bears no date, but is supposed to have been written at Prague in 1783. — Ed. M. W.]

Herewith I return you, my good baron, your scores, and if you perceive that, in *my* hand there are more *nota bene*\* than notes, you will find from the sequel of this letter, how that has happened. Your symphony has pleased me, on account of its ideas, more than the other pieces, and yet I think it will produce the least effect. It is much too crowded, and to hear it partially, or piecemeal would be, with your permission, like beholding an ant-hill. I mean to say that it is, as if Eppes the devil were in it. You must not snap your fingers at me, my dearest friend, for I would not for the world have spoken out so candidly, if I could have supposed it would give you offence. Nor need you wonder at this, for it is so with all composers, who, without having, from their infancy, as it were, been trained by the whip, and the maledictions of the *maestro*, pretend to do every thing with natural talent alone. Some compose fairly enough, but with other peoples' ideas, not possessing any themselves; others, who have ideas of their own, do not understand how to treat and master them. This last is *your* case. Only do not be angry, pray! for Saint Cecilia's sake, that I break out so abruptly. But your song

\* In the original stands *fenster* (windows), which signifies passages marked :: for the sake of drawing the reader's attention particularly to them.

has a beautiful cantabile, and your dear Franzl\* ought to sing it very often to you; and this I should like as much to see as to hear. The minuet in the quartet is also pleasing enough, particularly from the place I have marked. The coda, however, may clatter or tinkle, but it never will produce music. *Sapienti sat*, and also to the *nihil sapienti*, by whom I mean myself. I am not very expert in writing on such subjects, I rather show at once how it ought to be done.

You cannot imagine with what joy I read your letter. Only you ought not to have praised me so much. We may get accustomed to the hearing of such things, but to read them is not quite so well. You good people make too much of me: I do not deserve it, nor my compositions either. And what shall I say to your present,† my dearest baron, that came like a star in a dark night, or like a flower in winter, or like a cordial in sickness? God knows how I am obliged at times to toil and labor to gain a wretched livelihood, and Stanerl,‡ too, must get something. To him, who has told you that I am growing idle, I request you sincerely (and a baron may well do such a thing) to give a good box on the ear. How gladly would I work, and work, if it were only left to me to write always such music as I please, and as I can write; such, I mean to say, as I myself set some value upon. Thus I composed three weeks ago an orchestral symphony, and by tomorrow's post I write again to Hofmeister,§ to offer him three pianoforte quartets, supposing that he is able to pay. O heavens! were I a wealthy man I would say, "Mozart, compose what you please, and as well as you can; but till you can offer me something finished, you shall not get a single kreutzer. I'll buy of you every manuscript, and you shall not be obliged to go about and offer it for sale like a hawker." Good God! how sad all this makes me, and then again how angry and savage; and it is in such a state of mind that I do things which ought not to be done. You see, my dear good friend, so it is, and not as stupid or vile wretches may have told you. Let this, however, go a *cassa del diavolo*.

I now come to the most difficult part of your letter, which I would willingly pass over in silence, for here my pen denies me its service. Still I will try, even at the risk of being well laughed at. You say you should like to know my way of composing, and what method I

\* Probably the Baron's daughter.

† Some bottles of wine.

‡ The diminutive in the upper German dialect, for Constantia, the name of his wife.

§ The music-seller of Leipzig.

follow, in writing works of some extent. I can really say no more upon this subject than the following: for I myself know no more about it, and cannot account for it. When I am, as it were, completely myself, entirely alone, and of good cheer; say travelling in a carriage, or walking after a good dinner, or during the night, when I cannot sleep; it is on such occasions that my ideas flow best and most abundantly. *Whence* and *how* they come I know not, nor can I force them. Those ideas that please me I retain in memory, and am accustomed, as I have been told, to hum them to myself. If I continue in this way, it soon occurs to me how I may turn this or that morsel to account, so as to make a good dish of it, that is to say, agreeably to the rules of counter-point, to the peculiarities of the various instruments, and so forth. All this fires my soul, and provided I am not disturbed, my subject enlarges itself, becomes methodized and defined, and the whole, though it be long, stands almost finished and complete in my mind, so that I can survey it, like a fine picture or a beautiful statue, at a glance. Nor do I hear in my imagination the parts *successively*, but I hear them, as it were, all at once. I cannot tell the delight of this. All this inventing, this producing, takes place as it were in a pleasing lively dream. Still the actual hearing of the *tout ensemble* is, after all, the best. What has been thus produced I do not easily forget, and this is, perhaps, the best gift I have My Divine Maker to thank for.

When I proceed to write down my ideas, I take out of the bag of my memory, if I may use that phrase, what has previously been collected into it in the way I have mentioned. For this reason the committing to paper is done quickly enough, for everything is, as I said before, already finished; and it rarely differs on paper from what it was in my imagination. At this occupation I can therefore suffer myself to be disturbed; for whatever may be going on around me, still I write, and even talk, but only of fowls and geese, or of *Gretel* and *Barbel*,\* or some such matters. But why my productions take from my hand that particular form and style which makes them *Mozartish*, and different from the works of other composers, is probably owing to the same cause which renders my nose so-or-so large, so aquiline, or, in short, makes it Mozart's, and different from those of other people. For I do really not study nor aim at any originality; I should, in fact, not be able to describe in what mine consists,

\* *Gretel* and *Barbel* are diminutives for *Margarethe* and *Barbara*.

though I think it quite natural that persons who have really an individual appearance of their own, are also differently organized from others, both externally and internally. At least I know that I have constituted myself neither one way nor the other.

May this suffice, and never, my best friend, never trouble me again with such subjects. I also beg you will not believe that I break off from any other reason, but because I have nothing further to say on the point. To others I should not have answered, but have thought: *Mutschi, buschi, quitle. Etche molape newing!* \*\*

In Dresden I have not been eminently successful. The Dresden people fancy themselves to be even yet in possession of everything that is good, merely because they had formerly to boast of a great deal. Two or three good souls excepted, the people here hardly knew anything further about me, than that I had been playing at concerts in Paris and London, in a child's cap. The Italian Opera I did not hear, the court being in the country for the summer season. Naumann† treated me in the church with one of his masses, which was beautiful, well harmonized, and in good keeping, though too much spread, and as your C — would say, rather cold. It was somewhat like Hasse, but without his fire, and with a more modern *cantilena*. I played a great deal to these gentlemen, but I could not warm their hearts, and excepting "*wishy, washy*," they said nothing at all to me. They asked me to play on the organ, and they have most magnificent instruments. I told them, what is the real truth, that I had but little practice on the organ; nevertheless, I went with them to the church. Here now it appeared, that they had in *petto* another foreign artist, a professed organ-player, who was to kill me, if I may say so, by his playing. I did not immediately know him, and he played very well, but without much originality or imagination. I, therefore, aimed directly at this stranger, and exerted myself well. I concluded with a double fugue in the perfectly strict style, and played it very slowly, both that I might conduct it properly to the end, and that the hearers might be able to follow me through all the parts. Now, all was over. No one would play after this. Hassler, however, (this was the stranger's name, who has written some good things in the style of the Hamburg Bach),‡ was the most good-na-

\* What language this is, or what it means, I am not in the least able to tell.—Translator.

† Maestro di Capella, like Hasse, at the Electoral Court of Saxony.

‡ C. Ph. E. Bach, the second son of the great Sebastian Bach.

tured and sincere of them all, though it was he whom I had endeavored to punish. He jumped about with joy, and did not know how to express his delight. Afterwards he went with me to the hotel, and enjoyed himself at my table; but the other gentlemen *excused* themselves when I gave them a friendly invitation; upon which my jolly companion, Hassler, said nothing but "*Tausend sapperment!*"

Here, my best friend and well-wisher, my paper is full, and the bottle of your wine, which has done the duty of this day, nearly empty. But since the letter which I wrote to my father-in-law, to request the hand of my present wife, I have hardly ever written such an enormously long one. Pray take nothing ill! In speaking, as in writing I must show myself as I am, or I must hold my tongue, and throw the pen aside. My last words shall be: My dearest friend, keep me in kind remembrance!" Would to God I could, one day, be the cause of so much joy as you have been to me! Well! I drink to you in this glass: long live my good and faithful ——— .  
Amen!

W. A. MOZART.

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## MUSIC IN BOSTON.

WINTER SEASON 1840-41.

In commending the efforts of the Academy for the cultivation of orchestral music, we cannot omit stating our conviction that there are two things wanted here, to insure a steady and permanent improvement; the first being the means of drawing hither and domesticating amongst us good, practical musicians, the second of uniting them into an efficient orchestra.

We want some safe and fair prospect, which would make it desirable for a good orchestra player, to come here, or for a young man to take up this branch of the profession and devote his life to it. What are his prospects now? Teaching? there are many highly efficient orchestra players, whose education yet does not qualify them for teaching, who have studied only their own particular instrument; and how few instruments give employment to a teacher except the pianoforte! The military band? as our militia is at present instituted, he may calculate upon that source as part of his earnings; but it induces him to neglect what we want most for our orchestra. The wind instruments, or we should perhaps rather confine this remark to the brass instruments, show more than common execution; and they would soon learn discretion and taste by good, steady

orchestral practice ; but the stringed instruments are deficient both in number and power of execution. The theatre ? the spirit of the times is decidedly anti-theatrical, and this would therefore give an unsafe and scanty dependence. The ball-room ? it unfits for the orchestra. And besides all these prospects only go far enough to give him sufficient means to live, while he is able to follow his avocation ; but as soon as, by any accident, he is disabled, he is left destitute and his family unprovided for, and how much greater risk of accidents to life and limb is there in these times of careless and daring experimenting upon the mightier powers of nature, steam, electricity, &c. ! This being the case, we ask again, what inducement is there for him to choose this avocation ? and what can be done to remedy this defect ? The only way is the creation of a fund for disabled and destitute musicians and their families. This the musicians themselves might effect, if properly aided by the public. But this is not the place for a further consideration of this subject, and we merely throw out this suggestion and proceed.

But having acquired good instrumentists, we want them also united into an orchestra, which would fully understand and coöperate with each other, which would enter upon the performance of a composition in the same spirit, thus amalgamating the mighty mass of tones into one connected stream, instead of letting each individual rivulet run a race with the other to the end. The only means of effecting this is : regular and frequent practice together, with a hearty good will and constant attention to the effect of the whole, and under the judicious direction of a good leader. It cannot be expected that love of art alone will induce our musicians to devote considerable time to such practice — their time fully employed, yields them only the necessities of life ; nor that any voluntary association among them, would preserve that unanimity and unity, which is so necessary for effect — where every one feels himself equal to his neighbor, it is difficult for *all* voluntarily to submit to *one*. But we are of opinion that, if two of our societies whose interests would not interfere with such a union, would unite to take the same orchestra, they might with little extra expense insure regular meetings once or twice a week for practice beyond the rehearsals necessary for their own performances and by such liberality the societies themselves would be greatly benefited, for very soon the orchestra would be enabled to give a much increased effect to their accompaniments.

To return however from our long digression ; we cannot leave the instrumental music of last winter, without mentioning one concert, which introduced to us a highly accomplished artist. We mean Signor Paggi's Concert on the Oboe. His very appearance, his easy, graceful and elegant bearing, showed the well-bred artist, and his treatment of the Oboe confirmed this our first impression. He combined great power of tone, with purity and much expression ; his passages are round and fluent, and we found the Oboe in his hands

altogether a new instrument. Why does Mr. Paggi exhibit his talents so rarely to the public? why does he hide his light under the bushel? We want to hear such playing oftener, both that the public and our performers may elevate their taste by it.

In vocal music, we have not to notice so much life and progress as in instrumental. We have already mentioned that the Handel and Haydn Society produced Neukomm's Oratorio of the Mount Sinai; but the public took so little interest in it that it was soon laid aside for better known and better appreciated oratorios. The only novelty which the Boston Academy of Music produced was McElvey's Oratorio of "The Resurrection," a work which, we understand, for we have not heard it ourselves, was not calculated to excite much interest; it was but once performed. Neither have the Musical Institute produced any thing new. A real improvement in chorus singing we have observed only in one instance—in the private concert of the Musical Education Society. The discretion and correctness in the choruses of this Society was as surprising as it was gratifying, and reflected great credit on their teacher, Mr. Webb, as well as on their own zeal. A want of efficient solo singers is every where observable; that is, not so much a want of good voices; for fine voices for every one of the four parts are occasionally met with; but of cultivated voices. Systematic, scientific study, so eminently required to make a good voice available, is seldom applied, or if it is, it is only continued for a very short insufficient period, and what little superiority over common amateur singers it then gives, is forthwith used as capital to trade upon. Our larger musical societies with the professors at their head, might do much towards an improvement in this respect. They have much opportunity of finding out natural talent and superior voices among the young pupils that are constantly flocking to them. By taking such voices in hand and thoroughly educating them, they would procure, what is now so much wanted. It would certainly require careful instruction and constant watching that such instruction be judiciously applied in study and practice; it would require that the pupil and *all* his singing be for years, entirely under the control of his teacher; so that the system of the latter be not interrupted by others acting on different principles; and that the pupil do not take solo parts in public before his education is finished. This seems to impose great constraint on him, but he will most assuredly reap the benefit of it in the end.

So much of our own vocal music. The most remarkable visit among the vocalists, that came here to give concerts, in regard to the art was that of Mr. Braham. We have already spoken fully of the impression which his singing made upon us; and we will here only say, that, however much he may have disappointed us in some respects, we rejoice in having had an opportunity of hearing him. Were it only on account of the personal recollection of a man, whose name will long figure in the history of English vocal music, it would

be a sufficient reason, but notwithstanding these disappointments, the accomplished artist shone forth so eminently in all his performances, that they always highly interested us.

In conclusion, we will cast a glance upon the present position of our three musical societies. The Boston Academy of Music has struck upon a new branch of their plan, which they appear likely to follow up next season, and by which, if persevered in, they will undoubtedly farther advance the art; we refer to their instrumental concerts and their practical lectures on music. The other two societies also have stepped out of their regular course, by giving *secular* concerts on a *week* day, which, we believe, is a violation of their object, as expressed in their constitution. If so, and if it was merely done to obtain a momentary object or advantage, we cannot commend this movement. If however, it indicates a modification of their constitution and an extension of their objects, then certainly it is as yet premature to judge of it, and we must give them time to develop their new plans. The ample means of the Handel & Haydn Society, exempting their members from any personal sacrifices, would certainly enable them to operate for the art in a much wider sphere than they have done, if their constitution were so modified, or rather extended.

We have mentioned the practical lectures on music, by the Academy of Music; the subject is, however, of too much importance to pass it over by merely mentioning it. Popular lectures on subjects connected with the art, formed from the beginning one of the objects proposed to itself by the Academy, but this winter for the first time it was found practicable to enter upon this branch. Two lectures were given, one by Mr. Eliot on the poem and music of the Song of the Bell, and the other by Mr. Cleveland on the Organ. Both were still more intimately connected with music, and very appropriately, by practical illustrations. The subject was thus brought nearer home to the hearers; they were more interested in it, their intellect could the better follow it. We hope the Academy will continue to procure lectures on music by literary men, who take an interest in the art, for they will be one of the surest means of drawing the attention of the more intellectual part of our community to it. The science of musical Aesthetics would offer a rich field for these lectures.

From the same reasons we hail all other efforts to interest the amateurs of literature in the art, as a good omen, and we were rejoiced to see Mr. Power come forward with his lectures. For an individual, without the moral weight of an established society, the enterprise is a more difficult one, be his standing ever so high in the musical world, and in the present state of apathy against musical literature, it is not one, in which he can expect to see his labor rewarded and acknowledged; yet we would encourage Mr. Power to persevere and others to come forward; for the art wants it, and its advance must be their high reward.